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SUBJECT: USAU: AU COMMISSIONER LAMAMRA DISCUSSES GUINEA,
MADAGASCAR, SOMALIA, UN

REF: OUAGADOUGOU 1048

Classified By: Ambassador Michael A. Battle for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Deputy Assistant Secretary (DAS) for African Affairs Karl Wycoff met with the African Union (AU) Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ramtane Lamamra, on November 20 in Addis Ababa to address a range of issues. On the topic of Guinea, Lamamra said that while the AU had discussed deploying a support mission there, one has not been put in place. He lamented the strained relations between Madagascar negotiators and expressed the need to put such drama aside and move on. Lamamra discussed Somalia at length, explaining that the current stalemate necessitates serious consideration of other options. That said, the AU stands by the Djibouti Peace Process. Asked about speeding the flow of funds to Somalia, Lamamra said the PriceWaterhouseCoopers mechanism works well for donor funds to reach Somalia. He also said that UN-AU coordination is going well, allowing for normal challenges associated with collaboration between organizations. END SUMMARY.

GUINEA

¶2. (C) Guinea topped the list of topics that DAS Wycoff discussed with African Union (AU) Peace and Security Commissioner Ramtane Lamamra at a meeting at the AU in Addis Ababa on November 20. When DAS Wycoff advocated for an AU political/military observer mission to Guinea, Lamamra talked around the issue, speaking at length about various aspects of the Guinean situation, including the clear mandate of mediator and Burkinabe President Blaise Compaore to accept nothing short of junta leader Dadis's departure. Lamamra noted that both sanctions and mediation were being applied, and that Compaore "is proposing something consistent with what we think." (NOTE: Lamamra made this comment on the eve of Compaore's proposal saying that government members, including Dadis, could run for office if they resign at least four months before elections. It was not apparent whether or not Lamamra knew of this element of the proposal at the time of our meeting. See reftel. END NOTE.) He stated the need to maintain pressure on Guinea, but said that while deploying a support mission had been discussed, one has not been put in place.

¶3. (C) Lamamra did say that the AU had discussed two concepts with the President of the Economic Community of West African

States (ECOWAS): (1) Sending a modest mission to Guinea to assist the Inquiry Commission. (2) Setting up a force to protect those in charge of any transition that takes place. Given that a three-person advance team from the UN's Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights already had gone to Guinea, Lamamra did not see the need for a military and police component at this time. If that becomes necessary, however, the AU will act quickly to help. DAS Wycoff and Ambassador Battle reiterated the advantages of sending a mission expeditiously.

MADAGASCAR

14. (C) Turning to Madagascar and its belabored efforts to establish a transitional government, Lamamra addressed the problem of the mediators involved. Now that mediation is over, the AU feels it is time to move on and employ full-time, lower-level people to manage the next phase. However, he opined that continued infighting among mediators who are interested in advancing their own careers has complicated the situation. UN Chief Mediator Tieble Drame, for example, reportedly went to Madagascar after negotiations without the UN's knowledge. The AU is trying to clarify whether Drame had a UN mandate to do so. Lamamra scoffs at such drama and believes that those involved must present a united front to the Malagasy parties. We "need to ensure that the rules of the game are well-defined and the division of work is accepted by all parties," he said. DAS Wycoff noted that the U.S. intended to remain involved in promoting

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an early return to constitutional government, advocated for enhanced coordination among the mediators to ensure maximal effect, and stressed the importance of coordinated pressure on all parties for them to honor their commitments.

SOMALIA

15. (C) On the topic of Somalia, Lamamra emphasized that while the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) is not losing, it is not winning either. While the UN is now more involved than before, he said the impact of the UN's involvement on the overall situation is not very visible. The UN provides food and medicine, for example, but a Mission headquarters and level-three hospital are still lacking. In addition, troop protection is faulty and there are not enough armored personnel carriers. Lamamra acknowledged that zero risk is not possible, but more could be done to reduce risks. DAS Wycoff and Ambassador Battle noted that the U.S. had been the prime supporter of AMISOM and intended to continue to play a key role, including in enhancing UN support, on the ground, for AMISOM. We noted that the U.S. was ordering more equipment, including armored cars, for AMISOM forces, as well as preparing the next Ugandan battalion for deployment.

16. (C) Lamamra offered his strategic perspective on Somalia. First, he believes that Somali President Sheikh Sharif should expand his political base and aim for greater cohesion. This is difficult, however, given that so-called allies often come together simply to get a piece of the pie or show they chose the right side. Second, Lamamra explained that Sharif "tolerates" AMISOM since it is useful, but does not necessarily like it or want to be associated with it. To complicate matters, Uganda and Burundi see AMISOM as theirs, not the AU's, underscoring the need to diversify AMISOM's composition. In this context, Lamamra sees a strong need to "stimulate thinking about other options." It is for this reason that he asked the UN to prepare a potential scenario for an operation in Kismayo.

17. (C) Responding to a question about the Djibouti Peace Process, Lamamra stated that the AU does not favor a revision

in the process and believes that the sooner Somalia can hold elections, the better. Before stating this position, however, he discussed the belief held by Egypt, Eritrea, and Qatar that the Djibouti process has not worked and should be revisited. While the African Union Commission accepts Qatar's role in Sudan as helpful, it is much less certain of Qatar's participation in Somalia given allegations that the Gulf country supports the Somali insurgency via Eritrea. Lamamra believes that reestablishing diplomatic ties between Qatar and Ethiopia would balance Qatar's relationship with countries in East Africa. For its part, Egypt "wants leverage by having good relations with Asmara." Given such dynamics, Lamamra believes that a regional approach is required to make headway in Somalia. DAS Wycoff noted that the U.S. and most other countries opposed any effort to reopen the Djibouti Peace Process at this point and that the U.S. was pressing Eritrea to stop its support for Al Shabaab and other violent extremists, including through a possible UN Security Council (UNSC) resolution. Both the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the AU had made clear their position vis-a-vis Eritrea and the U.S. supported this position. DAS Wycoff also noted the importance of having the AU and UN work together smoothly on Somalia, noting that the appointment of a new AU Special Envoy for Somalia offered an opportunity for improvement in this area.

18. (C) When DAS Wycoff pressed Lamamra to find ways to speed up the flow of money to the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and AMISOM, Lamamra said that UN Trust Fund procedures are slow, taking up to two years, but the PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC) mechanism offered much promise for faster action in the future. He explained that accounting problems are responsible for the slow disbursement of funds. "If it were corruption, it would have been clearer. It's technical," he said. Lamamra also emphasized that the Somali government must take ownership of how funds

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are allocated by deciding what it needs and working more closely with partners. DAS Wycoff noted that it was critical to find ways to streamline the procedures and find ways to remove obstacles to the flow of funds. Delays were hampering support for AMISOM and the TFG.

19. (C) Lamamra revealed plans by the Spanish Government to initiate a high-level forum of international partners to demonstrate their political commitment to Somalia and to discuss the way forward. He speculated that this forum might be convened during the first quarter of 2010 once Spain has the European Union presidency.

UN-AU COORDINATION

10. (C) Asked about the efficacy of UN-AU coordination, Lamamra said that while it could be better, it is going well. He noted that the volume of joint activities is ever-increasing, and that personalities and differing methodologies factor in, but one "cannot expect an entrenched organization and a nascent one with ambitions to get along without difficulty." The UN Secretary General has agreed that he should meet frequently with AU Chairperson Jean Ping, as should Lamamra and his counterpart. Lamamra mentioned plans for the AU to present the Mbeki report on Sudan to the UNSC as an example of upcoming cooperation.

11. (U) DAS Wycoff has cleared this message.
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